

The Bagram Bullet

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Jones Welcomes Afghan General



Colonel Don Jones (right), 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group commander, welcomes General Jalil and interpreter.



Purple hearts awarded to Air Force civil engineers

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Ground Liaison Officer

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A-10 Thunderbolt on target protecting troops

By Staff Sgt. Shanda De Anda

379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN – As the first aircraft specially designed for close air support of ground forces, the A-10 Thunderbolt continues to be a symbol of hope in the field. It's reputation – deliver bombs on target with fast, furious, accurate precision.

To make this happen, A-10 pilots rely on numerous people to ensure mission readiness whenever and wherever needed. Key players in that team are weapons loaders and the army line officer.

As weapons loaders “we put the power in air power,” said Tech. Sgt. Jay Cullins, 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron weapons expeditor. “To know that our weapons system actually make it out there and saves lives and to know that some Army (and other ground forces) made it home is the most rewarding part of what we do.”

The Thunderbolt's weapon system, a 30mm GAU-8/A Gatling gun, can fire 3,900 rounds a minute and can defeat an array of ground targets including tanks and other armored vehicles. Once the A-10 weapons are fully loaded and pilots' get a call from the field, a chain reaction is set into motion to help ensure pilots know exactly where to deliver their payload. An Army line officer here plays an intricate role in that process.

“Our job is to paint a clearer picture of the situation so that A-10 pilots spend less time trying to figure out what's going on once they're in the air and more time in action,” said Army Capt. Reginald Geans, GLO here.

Captain Reginald and Army Sgt. 1st Class Brian Burton, GLO, cover 24-hour operations and help answer the questions what, where and who before pilots arrive on site.

“For example, if CAS is requested in support of a convoy, we would find out the number of vehicles, the markings of vehicles, the start and end point of the convoy and ensure that we have call signs and other contact information for the ground commander so when pilots reach destination they have a clearer idea of who the friendlies are and where the targets are located,” said Captain Geans.

“Sometimes it's as simple as translating service lingo to clarify the ground commander's intent, how to achieve the objective or how units are moving and working together on the ground.”

Often referred to as the premiere close air support asset aircraft, although this twin-engine jet aircraft can survive direct hits from armor-piercing and high-explosive projectiles up to 23mm, the combined team support helps ensure mission successes.

